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The following hostesses and hosts will be available throughout the Pioneer Days Weekend to give you any information, direction or assistance you may need:

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PIONEER DAYS MENU



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SUNDAY'S ACTIVITIES

- 10:00 A.M.-Noon -- Church of your choice.
- 11:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M. -- Chicken 'n Dumplings at Marlinton Fire House, sponsored by Brushy Flats Home Demonstration Club.
- 1:00 P.M.-5:00 P.M. -- Surrey and Wagon Rides; Displays at Museum. Wagons will run until after Hymn Sing.
- 1:00 P.M.-6:00 P.M. -- Horseshow at Marlinton Athletic Field, with many classes, trophies, ribbons and prize money.
- 2:00 P.M. -- Log Rolling Demonstration.
- 2:00 P.M.-5:00 P.M. -- Tours of Huntersville (First County Seat.)
- 4:00 P.M.-7:00 P.M. -- Sandwiches and drinks at Museum.
- 7:30 P.M. -- County Hymn Sing at Museum under the direction of Mrs. Willard Eskridge. (Will be held at Marlinton United Methodist Church in case of rain.) Bring a folding chair if possible.



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Pioneer Days Horse Show

Show Co-Chairman and Secretary.....Judy Cutlip, Hillsboro

Show Co-Chairman and Secretary.....Ruth Taylor, Hillsboro

Show Advisor.....Charlene J. McNeel, Sinking Springs Farm

Announcers.....Jim Fleishman and Eugene Simmons

Ring Crew.....Hillsboro Volunteer Fire Department

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The Hillsboro Volunteer Fire Department and Firemenettes
thank you, and hope to see you again next year.

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Pioneer Days Horse Show

Marlinton Football Field, Marlinton, West Virginia

1:30 P.M. Sunday, July 11, 1971

Sponsored by the Hillsboro Volunteer Fire Department

No:	ENTRY FEE:	CLASS:	PRIZES:
1.	\$2.00	Western Halter	Trophy & 4 Ribbons
2.	2.00	Cloverleaf Barrel Race	T. & 4 R. \$4,\$3,\$2,\$1
3.	2.00	Western Pleasure	4 Ribbons \$8,\$6,\$4,\$2
4.	2.00	4-H Pleasure	Trophy & 4 Ribbons
5.	2.00	Ladies Western Pleasure	4 Ribbons \$8,\$6,\$4,\$2
6.	2.00	Trail Class	4 Ribbons \$8,\$6,\$4,\$2
7.	2.00	Children's Pleasure	Trophy & 4 Ribbons
8.	2.00	Western Horsemanship	T. & 4 R. \$4,\$3,\$2,\$1
9.	2.00	Trailer Race	Trophy & 4 Ribbons
10.	2.00	English Halter	Trophy & 4 Ribbons
11.	2.00	Plantation Pleasure	4 Ribbons \$8,\$6,\$4,\$2
12.	2.00	Open English Pleasure	4 Ribbons \$8,\$6,\$4,\$2
13.	2.00	Ladies English Pleasure	T. & 4 R. \$4,\$3,\$2,\$1
14.	2.00	English Horsemanship	T. & 4 R. \$4,\$3,\$2,\$1

WESTERN HIGH POINT HORSE OF SHOW ... Trophy & Ribbon
 ENGLISH HIGH POINT HORSE OF SHOW ... Trophy & Ribbon

EXPLANATION OF CLASS NO. 9 TRAILER RACE:

The Class is limited to Ten (10) entries. Each entry consists of One truck or car as the case maybe, One horse trailer, One horse, One driver and rider. Entries must park all vehicles on starting line. Judge will blow whistle, all entries must get out of their vehicles, unload their horse, saddle and bridle him, walk around ring one (1) time, unsaddle and unbridle horse, load horse in horse trailer, load tack in tack compartment, get in vehicle and turn on lights.

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The Pearl S. Buck Second Seminar

GENERAL THEME: QUALITY OF LIVING

Topic 1971: "Creative Arts in Family Life"

Place: Hillstoro Public School and Pearl S. Buck Birthplace, Hillstoro, W. Va.
Dates: July 6, 7, 8, 1971 -- Sponsor: Pearl S. Buck Birthplace Foundation, Inc.

Pearl S. Buck was born at Hillstoro, West Virginia, of native West Virginia parents. She is the sole American woman to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, and one of the world's great citizens. Only within recent years has her native state attempted to honor her in a fitting manner. The West Virginia Federation of Women's Clubs bought her birthplace and surrounding land, and conveyed it to the Pearl S. Buck Birthplace Foundation, Inc., a non-profit, non-stock corporation organized for the purpose of restoring the birthplace and developing the Pearl S. Buck Cultural Center of the Arts and Humanities. Plans include the building of a suitable structure to house Miss Buck's original manuscripts, her personal property and awards now being acquired by the Foundation. An annual Seminar is an activity of the Foundation.

The purpose and objective of the Annual Seminar, started in 1970, is to give the public an opportunity to hear a stimulating discussion by selected and varied panelists on American life. This year's topic is about family life. Eight panelists, including Pearl S. Buck, will discuss the following topics:

July 6, "Literature in Family Life"

July 7, "Changing Styles in Family Life"

July 8, "Creative Arts & Professional Design in Family Life"

Each Seminar session will be from 10 A.M. until noon. The last half hour of each session will be for audience participation. Admission is free. On Tuesday evening at 8 P.M. Miss Buck will speak to the public at Hillstoro Junior High School.

Each afternoon the public is invited to visit the Pearl S. Buck Birthplace, the property of the Pearl S. Buck Foundation, which is to be renovated, and the future plans of the Foundation will be explained.

The Pearl S. Buck Birthplace Foundation has been financed by dues from its members and donations. No officer or director receives any pay. Public support is needed. Everyone is invited to become a member or make a donation.

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MOUNTAIN FOLK MUSIC CONTEST

7:00 P.M. - Saturday, at Marlinton Athletic Field. Judging will be divided into two groups: Group I will be Modern Style Music (blue grass, country, country western and autoharp). Group II is Mountain Music and will be broken into the following sections: Section I - dulcimers (3 & 48 string), French harps and zithers; Section II - banjo and guitar (only mountain style); Section III - singing without accompaniment; Section IV - fiddle. Cash awards of \$150.00 will be awarded.



HORSE PULLING CONTEST

Saturday, immediately following the parade at Marlinton Athletic Field. Prizes will be awarded by elimination. Each entry will be awarded \$10.00, with cash prizes as follows: 1st - \$125.00; 2nd - \$75.00; 3rd - \$50.00; 4th - \$35.00; 5th - \$25.00; 6th - \$15.00; 7th - \$10.00.

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The Quadreelers will perform
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THE QUADREELERS -- (left to right) Bill Lovelace, June Lovelace, Jim Dolan and Ed Gardner. Absent, Bert Dodrill (fiddler).

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WEEKEND MENUS

Friday, July 9

- 9:00 A.M. - Bake Sale--Sandwiches and drinks at Gym. Sponsored by 4-H Clubs of Pocahontas County.
10:00 A.M. - Bake Sale at C. J. Richardson Store. Sponsored by Methodist Church.
11:00 A.M.-7:00 P.M. - Ham and Biscuits, Sandwiches, Cake, Cookies, Drinks at Museum. Sponsored by Pocahontas County Historical Society.
11:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M. - Sandwiches (Ham, Ham Salad, Chicken Salad, Peanut Butter and Pimento Cheese), Cupcakes, Cake, Coffee, Tea and Lemonade at Fire House. Sponsored by Big Flats Home Demonstration Club.
4:00 P.M.-7:00 P.M. - Spaghetti Dinner at Marlinton Methodist Church. Sponsored by W.S.C.S.

Saturday, July 10

- 10:00 A.M. - Bake Sale at Museum. Sponsored by Lobelia Rebekah Lodge.
10:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M. - Hamburgers and Hot Dogs at First National Bank Parking Lot.
11:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M. - Ham and Biscuits, Sandwiches, Cake, Cookies, Drinks at Museum. Sponsored by Pocahontas County Historical Society.
11:00 A.M. - Barbecued Chicken Dinner at Marlinton Presbyterian Church. Sponsored by Women of the Church.
4:30 P.M.-7:00 P.M. - Ox Roast at Marlinton Elementary School Cafeteria. (Barbecued Beef on Bun, Baked Beans, Cole Slaw, Ice Cream, Coffee, Tea and Milk. Tickets: Adults-\$2.50 at door, \$2.00 in advance; Children-\$1.50. Sponsored by Marlinton Jaycees.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 24)

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West Virginia

(Continued from page 23)

Sunday, July 11

11:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M. - Chicken 'n Dumplings (Green Beans, Mashed Potatoes, Cole Slaw, Home-made Bread, Cake, Coffee, Tea and Lemonade) at Fire House. Sponsored by Big Flats Home Demonstration Club. Tickets: \$2.00. Will also serve sandwiches.
4:00 P.M.-7:00 P.M. - Sandwiches and Drinks at Museum.

SPECIAL INFORMATION

1. An Information Booth will be in front of the Marlinton Presbyterian Church. Inquire there for any directions or information you may need. Also register there for the oldest person contest and the prize for the person traveling the longest distance. There will be a \$5.00 prize for each contest.
2. Attend the Dinner on Thursday Evening preceding the "Miss Pocahontas Pageant" at the Pocahontas County High School Cafeteria. This event will officially open the 1971 Pioneer Days Weekend.
3. Plan to attend the Pearl S. Buck Seminars at Hillsboro July 6, 7, 8, and visit her birthplace there.
4. Come to the Museum on Friday Afternoon and Saturday Morning to see Crafts demonstrated. An authentic log cabin can also be visited on the Museum lawn.
5. The Pioneer Art Contest is exhibited at the Museum. Entries have been sent in from all the Pocahontas County Schools.
6. A Wildlife Exhibit will be at the First National Bank Parking Lot.
7. There will be tours of Huntersville on Friday and Sunday afternoons. Visit the first county seat of Pocahontas County!
8. Visit the Pioneer Days Craft Corner in the Gym during the weekend. Buy lovely hand crafted items.
9. There is limited seating facilities at the Museum, so bring a folding chair if possible, to the Friday and Sunday Night programs.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Historical Society would like to express our appreciation to our advertisers and donors for making this program possible. Our thanks and appreciation go also to the many individuals, clubs and organizations who have worked hard to make Pioneer Days 1971 a success. We especially thank the following people who have devoted their time to this community project:

Chairman: 1971 Pioneer Days: Douglas Dunbrack
Committee Chairman:

Patrons: Martinus Jacobs, Lytle Campbell, Kenneth Coburn
Greens: H.J. Shores, Bill McNeil

Deputy: Mrs. Katherine McClure, Rotary Club

Publicity and Promotion: Mrs. Ann Sharp, Bill McNeil

Hosts and Hostesses: Mrs. Dale Curry

Space Donor: L.H. Humphreys, Jr., Lanes Club

Hydro Sign: Mrs. Willard Eckridge

Coffee: Mrs. W.J. Beckman

Miscellaneous Donor: Mrs. Lanty McNeil, Eugene Simmons, Bill McNeil

Decor: Mrs. Lanty McNeil, Hillsdale Fire Department

Music: Concert: Black Mountain Bluegrass Boys

Wagon Ride: Richard Barlow, Martinsburg Fire Department

Barry: Helen: Lupton Sharp

Book: Mrs. Fred Burns, Jr., Mrs. A.E. McNeil (at Museum)

Space Selling: Concert: Fred Burns, Jr., Eugene Simmons

Exposition: Evening: Concert: Walker Jet

Music: Evening: Concert: Lytle Neighbors

Space: Sign: Mrs. Bill Harper, Steve Neighbors

Spelling Bee: Mrs. Ben Clifton

Gift: Sign: Mrs. Della Vannest

Art: Sign: Miss Edith May, Mrs. Russell Barlow, Mrs. Ed Wilson

Friday Night Program: Mrs. Ben Morgan

Craft: Donor: Mrs. Ned Hoffman

Gift: Book: Donor: Wanda Myers, David Hamble, Mrs. Willie Seagraves

Exposition: Demonstration: David Beveridge

Official Program: Mrs. Fred Burns, Jr., Doug Condrick, Mrs. Tom Condrick

Sign: Mrs. Ann McNeil, Miss Christine McNeil

Program: Daria: Sign: Ed Hamble, Beverly Hamble

Treasurer: Mrs. Fred Burns, Jr.

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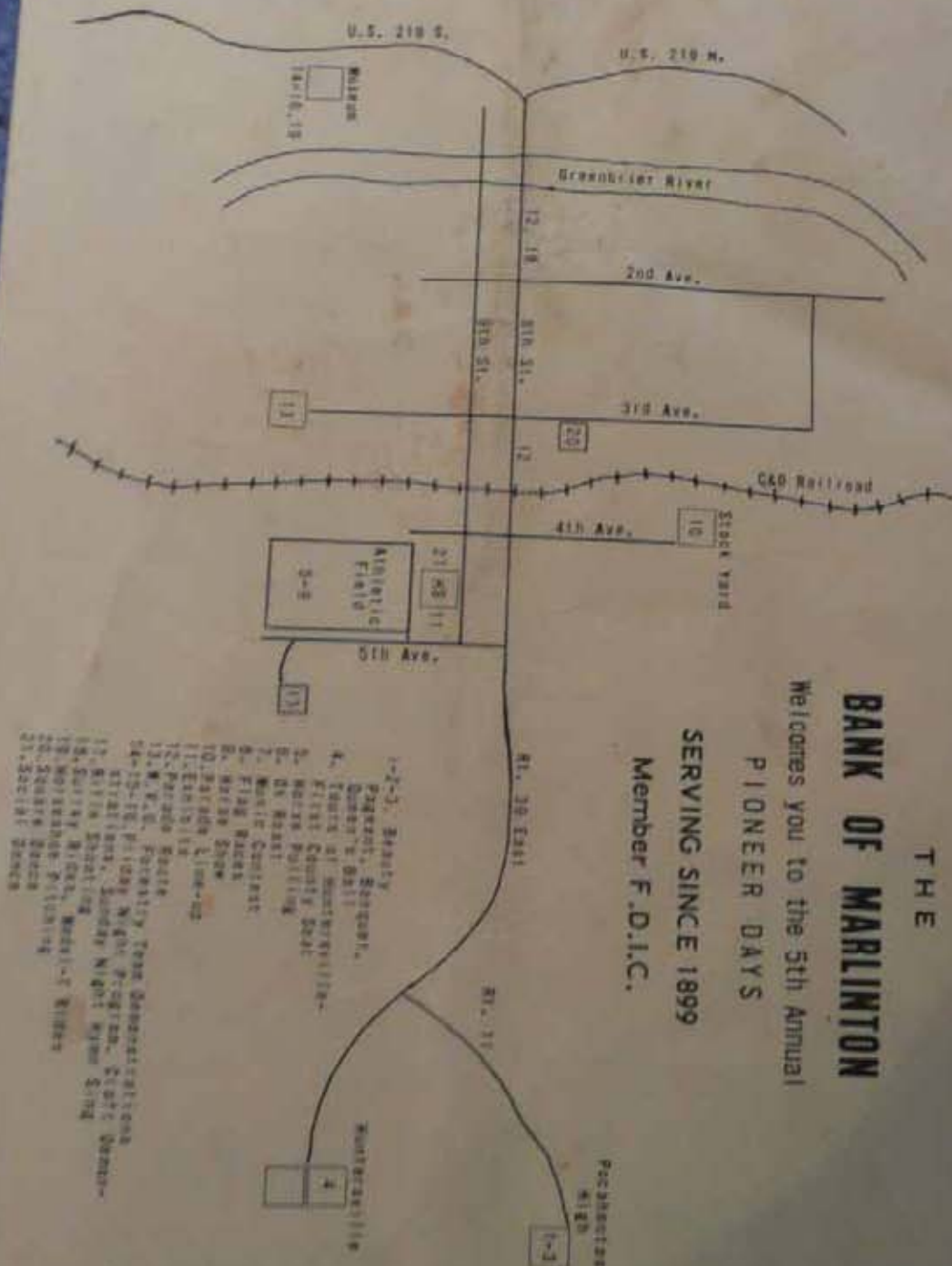
BANK OF MARLINTON

Welcomes you to the 5th Annual

PIONEER DAYS

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DID YOU KNOW?

Huntersville became the County seat of Pocahontas County by an act of the Virginia Assembly in 1822.

JOHN BRADSHAW, a prominent citizen, named Huntersville as a compliment to the hunters who came there during the hunting seasons. It was the principal trading post for the county several larger stores being there.

In 1852 a fire destroyed most of the town and during the Civil War it was burned by Federal troops sent in from the garrison at Beverly to prevent it being a Confederate depot for military supplies.

The stone jail, which was

built in 1821, is still standing.

The courthouse was located near the jail. Religious services were held there for many years; then the academy was built in 1842 and was used by the Methodists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians as a place of worship.

The Presbyterian Church was constructed in 1854 on land donated by GEORGE E. CRAIG, a prominent business man of Huntersville. It was used as a hospital by both the Federal and Confederate troops during the war.

The bell in the Church was bought around 1855 by the ladies having a fair, and selling cakes, pies, cookies, and bread. The bell cost around \$75.00, and is still in use today.

The Masonic Lodge, the first one in the county, was granted a charter November 11 1875. The meetings were held on the second floor of the Courthouse. When the county

Whites
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seat was moved to Marlinton,
a Lodge Hall was constructed
as a second story of the Pres-
byterian Church. It was ded-
icated June 18, 1896.

The first organization
meeting for Pocahontas County
was held in Huntersville at
the home of JOHN BRADSHAW.
The first Commissioners of
the County were JOHN JORDIN,
WILLIAM POAGE, JR., JAMES
TALLMAN, ROBERT GAY, GEORGE
POAGE, BENJAMIN TALLMAN and
GEORGE BURNER. They were re-
quired to take an oath to sup-
port the Commonwealth and
"against duelling".

JOSIAH BEARD was sworn
in as the first Clerk of the
County Court and served from
1822 to 1831.

JOHNSTON REYNOLDS was
appointed the first Attorney
for the Commonwealth.

ABRAHAM McNEEL was app-
ointed the first Coroner.

The first Deed presented
for recording in Pocahontas
County was in May Court 1822,
and was from THOMAS COCHRAN

to JAMES RANKIN.

The first Minister to be required to post bond was LUDIVICTUS ROBINS in July 1822 for \$1,500.00.

The first sworn jury was in October 1824, consisting of WILLIAM AULDRIDGE and eleven others.

The first Levy was laid in June, 1822.

At the Court Meeting of May 1822, it was ordered that contracts be let to the lowest bidder for the construction of a brick Court House, a brick Clerk's office and a brick jail.

Possibly the first murder trail held in Pocahontas County was on December 17th, 1825, and was against "PEGGY, a female slave", for smothering her newborn illegitimate child. She was acquitted.

In 1822, Pocahontas County paid \$4.00 bounty on wolf scalps.

In 1822 the Court House kept records of Deeds, Trust Deeds, Marriages of Whites and Marriages of Blacks, Deaths of

Whites and Blacks, and Surveys.
Births were not recorded until
1853. All of the above original
records are now a part of the
Pocahontas County Court House
in Marlinton, West Virginia.

N O T E S

This Pamphlet prepared by the
POCAHONTAS COUNTY CLERK'S
OFFICE, Marlinton, West Va.



Pioneer Days—July 8, 9, 10, 11

























Well Casing - in field below
bridge on Buckleys - Still there
about $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. out of ground - well
used for Comm. that was there then.

Susie & Glenn Can add to or
Contradict my recs, since they
are older than I am.

School House on Dry Creek - ^{Area end} ^{to 3000 ft} ^{Area} ^{Area}
Edna taught there some - Bill
McNeill possible game land.

Electricity Came to Buckleys in '39 ^{June}
Capt. Kellingsworth - P.D. & W.W. Graham
Bill Rogers ^{Bill Rogers}
Big Salesmen - 3.00 per mo. per mile
as far as Bill Rogers - Joe took it
to Paul's Deneau present home at our
Expense.

1916-17-18 ^{+ Model} ~~Model~~ Cars in this part
of Country - Indian trails used as roads
2 in our place.

Norman Rose - 14 yrs - 15⁺ Airplane
He saw come over - field over towards
old house.

Monument being erected - ^{this Jan} ¹⁹⁷⁶ ~~1976~~
Pioneer Settler of Swago - was
Thomas McNeill - Area's History

Well Casing - in field below
bridge on Buckleys - Still there
About $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. over ground - well
Used for Comm. that was there then.

Susie or Glenn Can add to or
Contradict my version, Since they
are older than I am.

School Horse on Bay Creek - West
Lower end
of Bay
Place
Edna taught there some - Rose
will possess game land.

June

Mr. Hill's posse's game land.

Electricity came to Buckeye in ^{June} '39

Capt. Killingsworth - P.D. & W.W. Graham

Bill Rogers
Scales either - 3⁰⁰ - Geo M. per mile

as far as Bill Rogers - Joe took it

To Paul's Dancin' present home at our

Expense.

+ Model

15 - ~~Model~~ Paul's - 1st

of Country - Indian + rails used as roads
2 in over places.

Norman Rose - 14 yrs - 15th Airplane

He Saw Come over - field over towards
old house,

this Jan
1769th

Monument being erected -
Pioneer Settler of Swago - was
Thomas McNeill - Pioneer's History

93 Spring Cleaning

By Louise McNeill

I lost one of the great West Virginians when Laureate Louise McNeill was buried on June 9, 1993 — West Virginia Day, naturally enough. Her long life overlapped the entire history of GOLDENSEAL, and we were proud to have had the opportunity to bring some of her prose into

our favorite was "Spring Cleaning," a previously unpublished manuscript she drew from her files in life. Like most of her prose this story deals with the Pocahontas County homeplace which we will have treasured since Revolutionary War



Mother Grace McNeill, shown here (right) with sister Neva, never dressed this way for the annual housecleaning.

in those gentle years, 1890-1920, our Pocahontas County household was relaxing. For despite the Great Granny's temper fits, the Mama's annual bouts of housecleaning, our life still moved to the slow rhythm of the seasons, and the sky roof of our cottage in the meadow the sun fell on the snow gently, and summer rain.

It was a country school-teacher later a principal and a good, even great, at that. He was also a part-time farmer with a pocket and a dream in his name was George McNeill. Nearly everyone in the neighborhood called him "Butt" but not to his face. He had once been a school-teacher, but now she was a cook, gardener, seamstress, maid, pig woman, raiser, blackberry pie maker, moreover, my mother. She hated it every day

and every season, but particularly when the spring sunshine came in to show it up. So every May or early June she must hold her great spring housecleaning, a rigorous and ancient ritual which we must celebrate from before daybreak until after dead dark.

Not like later when someone would come in to wash the woodwork in my house, Windex my windows, and I'd lug the box of dusty Christmas decorations upstairs. No, my mother, when she spring housecleaned, spring housecleaned; and there was nothing casual in her touch.

On that morning, chosen by moon signs for its promise of "warm and sunny," Mama would be up long before daylight, shaking the kitchen range down, grinding her coffee, putting on the bacon and eggs. Then, breakfast over, we would hurry out to do the milking, strain the milk, slop the hogs, feed the chickens, and start carrying in, by way of three-gallon buckets, a barrel of water from the spring. Then a fire would be built at the wash place

and two 20-gallon kettles of water put on to boil.

By then the sun would be up, the yard grass drying, and the fire gone out in the kitchen range. When the stove cooled sufficiently, with G. D. helping we would pick it up and, with great labor and puffing, carry it out into the yard. This done, it was time for G. D. to go off to his manwork, though sometimes, as a boon to Mama's intentions, he would hire a sturdy neighbor woman who would come across the field at sun-up, happy to work for 35 cents a day.

Thus supported and often with brother Ward, too, staying around to add his carrying power to the festivities, Mama would begin to transfer all our goods and chattels from house to yard. For this was the old custom, to carry every lock, stock, and bobble out of the house, set the wild collection down on the yard grass, scrub it or dust it and sun it, and then, in the late evening, the inside of the house by then scrubbed and squeaky clean, to carry everything back in.



r Grace McNeill, shown here (right) with sister Neva, dressed this way for the annual housecleaning.

larly and two 20-gallon kettles of water
in to put on to boil.

By then the sun would be up, the
yard grass drying, and the fire gone



Perhaps the labor was not actually as heavy as it now seems to me, for we had only wooden furniture; and Grandpa's black walnut dining table was only eight feet long; the living parlor stove easy enough for four people to carry; and, besides, the day itself gave forth its air of singular flurry and excitement, of new beginnings and hot soapsuds and cleansing sun.

The first thing Mama would do was to get the parlor stove out and stored for the summer in the smokehouse. Then she would take a hammer and screwdriver and start her attack on the windows — the small-paned, cordless variety — for they must be removed, their casing strips coming down with them; then all the windows lugged out carefully into the dooryard and leaned up against the plank fence to receive their ablutions of warm water and homemade soap.

Then all the furniture, odds and ends, rugs, books, and dishes must be carried or dragged out onto the yard grass and the clothes hung on the clothesline to sun. This great out-going would include, of course, all the old-fashioned beds, with their slats, springs, leather ticks and straw ticks — a mass of wood, metal and striped ticking that would be scattered in a confused tangle all across the front yard.

Then the cleaning would begin with buckets of hot water from the boiling kettle and buckets of clean cold water for the rinse. And, of course, into the hot water Mama

would put handfuls of her soft homemade soap, that brown rosy substance that she and Granny — in its own season — had made from hog grease and ash lye. This soft soap, along with its peculiar clean stink, was the very center of cleaning day and the very cleaning process itself — the bedsteads to be washed with it and the windows and even the inside of the dresser drawers — so that now its strange brown smell comes back to me, but it is not the scent of cinnamon rose. Instead, it is a wild, brown, acid, slightly chemical smell, with a taint of rancid hog grease in it and with that sweet fragrance of childhood memory, soapsuds and joy and springtime sun. And a world away from "ring around the collar," Downy, Tide, and Cheer.

Mama would be pouring soapsuds on the glass of the windows and washing them off with an old rag. Then she would turn the windows over, wash the other side, slosh buckets of cold rinse water on them, and leave them drying in the sun.

Usually during this initial stage of the festivities, Ward would be patiently cleaning out the kitchen stove and stovepipe with a wire and sticks and an old leather duster, the winter's collection of soot floating dangerously close to the clothesline; and the old dog barking his excitement; the clothes flapping merrily on the line.

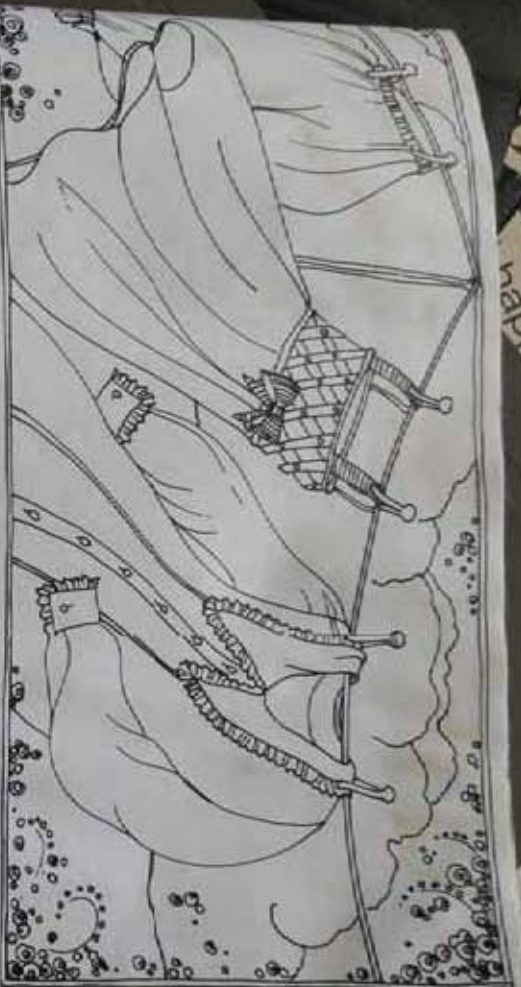
The hired woman, left inside the house, would be scrubbing the wide-board floors, dusting the

walls and ceilings with a rag-covered broom, and washing the painted woodwork with slathers of brown soap.

Elizabeth and I might be assigned to "red up" the dresser drawers, wash the reams of kitchen utensils, and wipe off G.D.'s multiplying tribe of books. As we cleaned the drawers, there was one drawer we must never open. It was the right-hand upper drawer of Grandpa's black walnut highboy — the drawer that was never opened except by the Hazzard the House. That was G.D., and G.D. was to town or far off in the field someplace.

We knew Grandpa as the Captain, from his Civil War service, so the drawer was never opened because it was "the Captain's drawer," though by 1920 — say 1930 was the year of this specific cleaning — the old Captain had been dead for many years. But his drawer was never opened; and not opened now, either, except by the oldest male member — because it is the Captain's drawer. So, back then, Elizabeth and I would neat and refold the sheets and pillowcases in the lower part of the highboy and then start washing the endless dishes and endless pots and pans.

By now — getting on toward noon — Ward would be filling the straw ticks with the new straw from the straw rick, and Mama would sew them up with a darning needle and twine thread. Then the old straw would be thrown into the hog pen and the washing and scrubbing would go on.



Granny, meanwhile, for she was busy on her own individual edge of the activity, would be going over the bedspring, and all the bed ticks and cranets, going over them in that ancient routine of the mountains, with a turkey feather tipped in turpentine. For turpentine is death on bedbugs, and Granny was always certain that our beds had been colonized by the little red bloodsucking bugs. The long argument was one of the

any sources of friction between Granny and Mama, for Mama insisted that there were no bedbugs, while Granny insisted that there were whole settlements of them and would spend half a day with her only feather going in and out of all the cracks and cranets in her old pioneer routine. Next she would shake the bedheads with buckets of soapy water, and then get her a big stick and start beating and flailing at the rugs.

The rugs, with one exception, Mama's 9-by-12 from the floor of the parlor, were not rugs, actually, but home-woven cotton carpets, the ones that Lydie Allen, up on Dry Creek, wove on her great clacking loom. None of the women of our house could weave carpets now — the old skills passing slowly and silently — but Lydie Allen could still weave, and also Gerodma Susan and Cousin Mahalie, though Lydie did most of the neighborhood carpets now.

So Mama, when new carpet was needed, would cut carpet tags in

the winter, cutting their long strips from pieces of worn-out clothing, then sewing the strips together, and winding them into great basketball-sized balls. Then she would carry the great soft multicolored balls up the creek to Lydie, and, when the carpet was woven, would nail it down on the floor with carpet tacks, the old square-topped kind.

These carpet tacks, though only around the carpet edges, could wreak havoc on a child's bare feet, and turpentine would have to be poured down into the little puncture holes. Then, too, this carpet would become, during a long year's season, a great catch-all for dust and dirt. And though Mama all year, on her day of Saturday cleaning, would sprinkle salt and water on the carpet and sweep up the yellow, dirty salt, still the carpet was a dirty catch-all, and on spring cleaning day must be taken up from the floor, dragged out into the yard, then beaten and turned over, and beaten again with all of Granny's fury; while the dust rose from it in yellow tops, and the dog barked, and the chickens ran and cackled, and the wham-wham of Granny's beating stick echoed against the smokehouse wall.

At noontime we would hurriedly eat the cold lunch Mama had prepared for the occasion, and then hurry back to the conflict. The window curtains must be washed and stretched, the wearing clothes carried back into the house to their pegs and to our one closet, so that

the scatter rugs could be put on the clothesline and beaten with paddles and sticks.

By now the hired woman would have the inside of the house all clean and soap-smelling, and we could begin to carry in our gear. The heavy old carpet came first, and we would drag it heavily and pull it into place. Then Mama and Ward, crawling on their knees, would attempt to stretch it and tack it down, thus to cover up, for another dusty season, the old Captain's wide-board cherry floor.

It would be almost dusk when we sat down to supper, and the cows still to be milked, the eggs still to be gathered, but Mama would glance around the dining room with a look of weary satisfaction. For though the ceiling still leaked, and the old wallpaper still hung in bubbles, the room was full of soap and sweetness. Then one time, I remember Mama going into the Captain's room in the twilight and setting up in the very middle of the table a bunch of pink flowers in her pretty glass dish. And all the room smelled of sweet flowers and brown soap and sunlight, and I can smell it now, and the harsh old brown soap smell makes the tears sting in my eyes.

The empty scrubbed rooms of the house would seem, at this juncture, very big and silent, with all their people gone. I would walk through the echoing rooms, smelling the sun and soap, and then, starting into the corners, would sense the presence of the old Captain as he had worked.

pounding and sawing here in the old summer — just back from Yankee prison, so many years ago — but Mama would call me from my wanderings. It was time to carry in the furniture, to reinstall the windows, and hang the clean curtains on their wooden rods. So our dragging and putting would begin all over. Then Mama would take — as all women must take — a spell of rearranging the furniture, a fit which would double the burden and require the transfer of dressers, tables, and what-nots of various kind. But the Captain's black walnut highboy would always be put back into its exact old place against the wall, and the carved handle of its upper right hand drawer would stare out at me, saying, "Do Not Touch. I am the Captain's Drawer."

After Mama's shifting and starting were over, we would carry the gear back into the kitchen — the stove still absent — and rearrange the cupboard shelves. Then the beds must be put together; their side pieces knocked into their places with a hammer; and the slats laid on, the springs, the straw tick, then the feather tick — in that order; and then the beds made up for the night. And the shining windows reinstalled with nails and hammer, and the sweet-smelling curtains hung.

Then, by late supper time, G. D. would come to help carry the range

back into the kitchen and — after an immortal struggle — manage to get the stovepipe into its hole.

But all of Mama's housecleanings did not go as smooth and sunny as this one typical day. One time a sudden rainstorm swooped down on us from Bridger's Mountain, with Mama running to gather up G. D.'s books, yelling at us to "get in the feather ticks" and the rain inundating a great scattering of our household effects.

Then that other and historic day when G. D. arrived at late noon hour to announce calmly that State School Superintendent Maurice P. Shawkey was arriving for a fried chicken supper at half-past six. It was this day that G. D. helped us carry in the furniture, helped nail down the carpet, labored manfully to get the window strips back in place. And all of us kids running back and forth for loads of old coats, kitchen equipment, shirts and neckties, leather volumes of Charles Dickens, chamber pots, bed ticks, spice boxes — and G. D. pounding the kitchen stovepipe into its black, ill-fitting hole.

By four o'clock the house was furnished, though the spice boxes were under the bed and the empty straw ticks stuffed into the closet. The beds looked a little low, of course, and the curtains wrinkled; but the fire was flickering in the kitchen stove, and Mama was out in the big

yard, ready to direct us as we ran the doomed chickens down. She selected three fairly young red roosters and set us on the trail. Around and around the big yard we pursued the first one, the rooster, his head up like a plumed Indian, running with his legs high and squawking wildly and doubling out and in. Round and round the yard and then round and round the chicken house, and the dog with his death howl, and Mama flapping her apron on the turns.

But finally he was cornered, then his two wild brothers with him; and all three carried, squawking and flailing, to the chopping block, where Mama dispatched them, in turn, with one practiced flash of the ax; then popped them into a scalding kettle; jerked their feathers off in big handfuls; and — lighting a copy of the *Toledo Blade* — singed them with the flaming headlines; and then rushed, her eyes cold and her apron bloody, into the kitchen to gut them, cut them, and pop them into the pot.

At 6:30, while G. D. and State Superintendent Shawkey sat in the parlor talking, Mama was setting down in front of G. D.'s plate at the dining table a great platter of golden-brown fried chicken, then adding her dishes of creamy mashed potatoes, gravy, canned green beans, spiced peaches, pickles, and hot biscuits, and warm blackberry pie. As she moved around the table in her clean starched apron, she seemed — except for the strange gleam in her gentle blue eyes — as quiet as a rose.

Then she went in and invited the two men to supper, apologizing for her biscuits as they sat down. When we were all pulled up to the table, and our starched napkins unfolded, G. D. cleared his throat and asked Superintendent Shawkey to say the grace.

"Thank you for the blessings of this day; bless this food to our use..." And Mama sitting there with her hands folded and her head bowed devoutly in prayer. For, as she used to say, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness," and "Many hands make light work." ❖

From Volume 19, number 1, Spring 1993

Louise McNeill's Last Book



In September 1994 the University of Pittsburgh Press published Louise McNeill's *Fermi Buffalo*, an extensive collection of the late poet laureate's favorite poems.

Fermi Buffalo was the project which provided excitement to McNeill's later years. The title reflects a fascination which McNeill — an historian whose son is a physicist — came to have with the contrast of the mythic past and the wonder of science, represented here by the buffalo roaming the grounds of the Fermi Nuclear Accelerator in Illinois.

As always, her poems range

from the profound to the playful, some as short as the three lines she called "Couple":

You have not changed —
for Time is kind,
Your face — to me —
is never lined,
As you grow wrinkled,
I grow blind.

McNeill collaborated with Charleston writer Topper Sherwood in preparing the manuscript for the book.

Fermi Buffalo, 91 pages, sells for \$29.95 in hardback and \$12.95 in paperback. The book may be purchased in bookstores or from the University of Pittsburgh Press, 127 North Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15260.

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not biscuits, and w
pie. As she moved
in her clean starch
seemed — except
gleam in her gentle
quiet as a rose.

Then she went in
two men to supper
her biscuits as they
we were all pulled
and our starched n
G. D. cleared his
Superintendent Sh
grace.

"Thank you for
this day; bless t
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